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ABSTRACT

This workbook provides exercises, role-playing activities, and self-evaluation activities to help deaf adolescents become more aware of their level of assertiveness and the ways assertive behavior can assist in daily living situations. Assertiveness is different from aggressiveness and passiveness, and many people learn through their families and their culture to not be assertive. Many factors may interfere with assertiveness, such as socialization, fear, and guilt. Individuals have problems being assertive because they have problems saying "no," asking for help, expressing feelings, expressing ideas, and asking for information. Individuals who lack assertiveness can be easily manipulated by other people. It is important that deaf individuals: analyze their strengths; become more responsible; know their rights; be persistent; use "I" messages to express feelings without blaming, nagging, or judging the other person; and understand the significance of nonverbal communication through facial expression, eye contact, gestures, body movements, and posture. (JDD)

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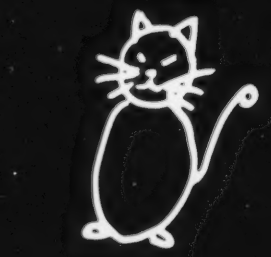

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The New ASSERTIVE You

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THE NEW ASSERTIVE YOU

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CHAPTER I.

What Is Assertive?

Mary Jo is a very neat person. Her roommate, Karen, is messy. One day Karen messed up Mary Jo's bed. She sat on Mary Jo's bed to do her homework. She ate cookies and left crumbs all over the bed. Karen left her glass of milk on the bed. The milk spilled. Mary Jo's bed was a mess. Mary Jo was very angry.

Karen is watching TV with some friends in the lounge. Mary Jo goes to the lounge. She walks over to Karen and she says, "Karen, I want to talk with you privately."

Karen doesn't answer. Mary Jo says again, "Please, Karen, I want to talk with you."

Karen gets up from her chair. She is angry, too. Mary Jo says, Karen, my bed is a mess. When you eat and drink on my bed, I get angry, because you leave the bed in a mess.

Karen says, "Be cool. It's only a bed. It's not important."

Mary Jo says, "I understand that it is not important to you. But it's my bed, and it is important to me. Please come with me and clean up the mess you made."

In the story, Mary Jo acted **assertively**. She told Karen how she felt. She was angry because Karen messed up her bed. She told Karen that she was angry, and she asked Karen to clean up the mess.

Mary Jo was **assertive**. She was honest about her feelings, and she told Karen what she wanted.

Assertive means: Saying what you feel or think.
Saying it clearly and honestly.

Aggressive Behavior

Aggressive behavior is different from assertive behavior. Aggressive behavior can be nasty and ugly. Aggressive people do not care about how other people feel. Aggressive people may insult other people, laugh at them, or hit them.

Imagine Mary Jo and Karen again. Mary Jo is angry because Karen messed up her bed. She sees Karen in the lounge with some friends. Mary Jo runs into the lounge. She says to Karen, "You slob! You messed up our room again! My bed is a mess! You are a lousy roommate and you should be ashamed, you jerk!"

That is aggressive behavior.

Aggressiveness means: Blaming, insulting, or attacking another person.

Being aggressive is not helpful. Karen will get mad at Mary Jo because she insulted her in front of her friends. They may be angry at each other for a long time. They may never be friendly again.

Passive behavior

Passive people are not assertive either. Let's go back to Mary Jo and Karen. Mary Jo finds her room and her bed in a mess. She cleans up the mess and she changes the bed. She is very angry at Karen, but she doesn't tell her about it.

When Mary Jo goes to visit another friend, Peg, she says to Peg, "That Karen is such a slob! She is a lousy roommate. I want a new roommate."

Now Mary Jo is being passive.

Passive means: Not saying what you think or feel to the person who should hear it. Passive people do not take care of themselves or their friends.

Do you understand the difference between assertive, aggressive, and passive behavior? Let's try another example.

Joe and Bob are friends. Joe and Bob plan to go bowling on Saturday. Bob is supposed to drive. Bob will pick up Joe at 1:00. Bob arrives at 3:00. It is too late to go bowling because Joe has to be home again by 4:00. Read these responses. Which one is assertive? Which one is aggressive? Which one is passive? Write the correct description next to each statement.

____ 1. Joe says: "I'm glad to see you, Bob. Let's go."
____ 2. Joe says: "You are a terrible friend. You didn't come at 1:00. I could beat you up. You ruined my day, you dummy."
____ 3. Joe says: "When you are two hours late, I get angry because we don't have enough time to go bowling."

The first response is passive. Joe doesn't express his feelings to Bob. The second response is agressive. Joe verbally attacks Bob. The third response is assertive. Joe explains his feelings to Bob.

Try some more examples. Which response is assertive? Which response is aggressive? Which response is passive? Write the correct description next to the statement.

Nancy and Peter are going out together. Peter sees Nancy at the movies with another boy.

____ 1. Peter beats up the other boy, and he tells Nancy that she is a terrible person.
____ 2. Peter goes home and goes to bed. He will not talk to Nancy for two days.
____ 3. Peter says to Nancy, "I was unhappy to see you at the movies with another guy. What is going on?

The first response is aggressive. Peter attacks the boy and calls Nancy a name. The second response is passive. Peter

doesn't tell Nancy his feelings. The third response is assertive. Peter tells Nancy his feelings and asks her for an explanation.

Jackie wants to use the family car. Her mother is in a bad mood and she tells Jackie, "No!".

____ 1. Jackie goes to her room, slams the door, and cries.
____ 2. Jackie screams at her mother. "You are mean and I hate you!
____ 3. Jackie says, "When you say no and you do not give me a reason, I become upset because I cannot understand.

The first response is passive. Jackie doesn't express her feelings. The second response is aggressive. Jackie hollers at her mother. The third response is assertive. Jackie explains her feelings to her mother.

Betty and Maria are in a restaurant. They have been waiting a long time. The waitress serves all the other people and ignores Betty and Maria.

____ 1. Betty and Maria throw the silverware on the floor and they leave.
____ 2. Betty walks over to the waitress. She says or she brings the waitress a note that says, "We have been waiting a long time. Please help us."
____ 3. Betty and Maria wait and they complain to each other.

The first response is aggressive. Betty and Maria mess up the restaurant. The second response is assertive. Betty and Maria explain what they want. The third response is passive. Betty and Maria do not express their feelings and wants.

Jean and Bill are old friends. Bill owes Jean $5.00.

____ 1. Jean hopes that Bill will pay her soon.
____ 2. Jean says, "Bill, you owe me $5.00 and never paid me back. I would like you to give me my money.
____ 3. Jean says, "You are cheap! You owe me $5.00. I'll never lend you money again."

The first response is passive. Jean doesn't ask Bill for the money. The second response is assertive. Jean asks Bill for the money. The third response is aggressive. Jean insults Bill.

Larry broke his arm six weeks ago. He goes to the doctor to have the cast removed. The doctor does not remove the cast, and he doesn't tell Larry why.

____ 1. Larry says or writes: "I expected to have my cast off today. Why are you not removing my cast?"
____ 2. Larry goes home and then complains about the lousy doctor.
____ 3. Larry says or writes: "You promised to take off the cast. Take it off now or I'll take it off myself."

The first response is assertive. Larry explains his idea to the doctor and asks for an explanation. The second response is passive. Larry doesn't explain his ideas. The third response is aggressive. Larry tells the doctor what to do.

How assertive are you? Check what you would do in the following situations.

1. You want to go to the movies with another deaf friend at night. Your parents say "no." They are afraid you might get hurt.
   ___a) You go to your room and you throw things around.
   ___b) You say, "I need to have more freedom to learn to watch out for myself."
   ___c) You say, "You treat me like a baby. You are mean."

2. Your roommate borrows your dictionary and you cannot find it.
   ___a) You look all around for the dictionary.
   ___b) You say, "You never return my things. Leave your hands off my things."
   ___c) You say, "When you borrow my things and don't return them, I become angry because I don't have them."

3. Your English teacher accuses you of cheating on a test. You didn't cheat.
   ___a) You say: "You are always picking on me," and you walk out of class.
   ___b) You say: "I am upset because you are accusing me of cheating and I didn't cheat."
   ___c) You say nothing.

4. A hearing friend says something to you and you do not understand.
   ___a) You nod your head and you smile.
   ___b) You say: "Pardon me. I didn't understand."
   ___c) You say: "Why don't you learn to sign better?"

5. You misunderstood the teacher and did the wrong homework. The teacher gives you an F.

___a) You say: "I misunderstood the assignment. I would like to do the correct assignment tonight."

___b) You say: "You never told me what to do. It's your fault."

___c) You say nothing.

6. Your family is all hearing. They are all laughing and you don't know what the joke is.

___a) You say: "I didn't catch what was so funny. Will you please explain?"

___b) You smile and laugh with them.

___c) You say: "You are always leaving me out. I can't wait until I'm out of this house.

7. A friend wants to borrow $10.00. You don't like to lend money.

___a) You say: "You never pay back. No way."

___b) You give your friend the $10.00.

___c) You say, "I'm sorry, I don't like to lend money."

8. You are in a restaurant. You ask for coke. The waiter brought you root beer.

___a) You say: "I asked for coke. Can't you understand anything? You won't get a tip."

___b) You say: "Thank you."

___c) You say: "I ordered a coke and you brought root beer. I'd like a coke, please."

9. Your friends are all drinking beer. You don't want any, but you feel stupid.

___a) You say: "Thanks. I'd love one."

___b) You say: "You drunks. I'm not drinking."

___c) You say: "I don't want any, thank you."

10. You are taking a class in a public school. You cannot understand everything that is going on.

___a) You ask for an interpreter.

___b) You try harder.

___c) You tell the teacher that he or she is a bad teacher.

These are the responses.

	Aggressive	Passive	Assertive
1.	c	a	b
2.	b	a	c
3.	a	c	b
4.	c	a	b
5.	b	c	a
6.	c	b	a
7.	a	b	c
8.	a	b	c
9.	b	a	c
10.	c	b	a

Can you see a pattern to your answers?

How many of your answers were assertive? _____

How many of your answers were aggressive? _____

How many of your answers were passive? _____

Is there one answer that you don't like? If there a passive or aggressive answer you would like to change to assertive?

Which one would you change?

Write the one that you want to change here.

_____

_____

_____

Chapter II

How Do People Learn Not to Be Assertive?

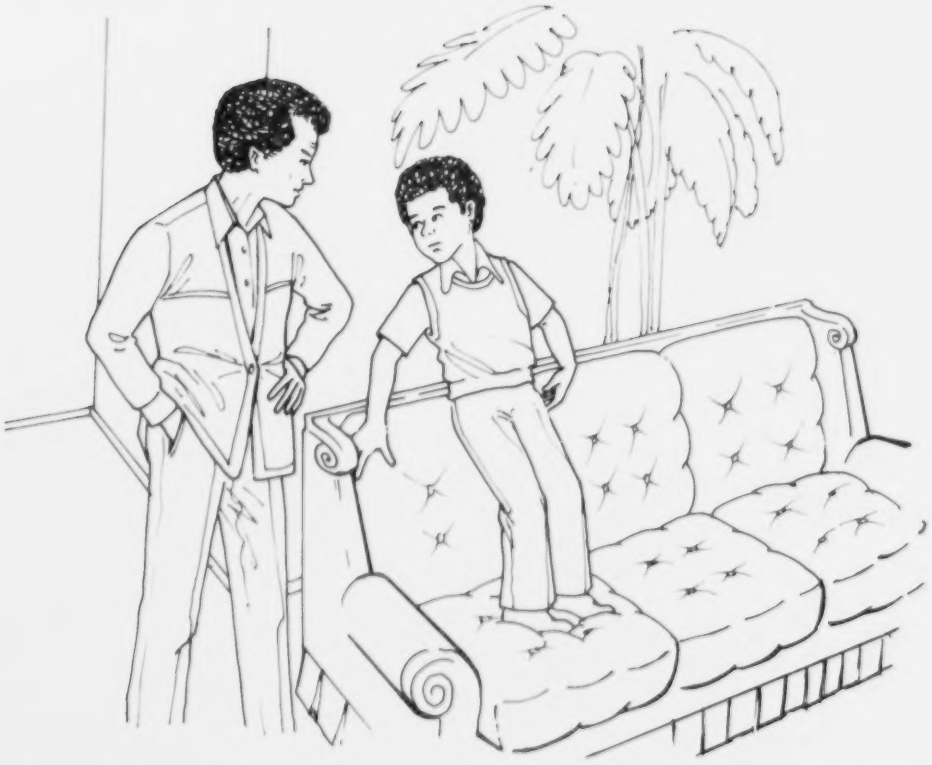
People learn how to act.

People learn how to behave. No one is born assertive. No one is born aggressive. No one is born passive. People learn their behavior. Parents, friends, relatives, and teachers show us how to act as we are growing up.

Learning in the Family

Our parents are nice when we do something that they like. They may punish us when we do something that they do not like. Sisters and brothers act this way, too. When we do things people like, they are nice to us. We get love.

If we do something they do not like, people are not nice to us.



Teachers act this way, too. If we do something that they like, they give us approval. If we say things they do not like, they are disapproving.

This is called **socialization.** Socialization teaches people how they are expected to act and to behave. Every country and culture has different expectations for the way people should behave.

Socialization: **Learning how to behave.**
Learning what people expect.

Learning in the Culture

Some cultures expect girls to sit quietly in pretty dresses, or help their mothers in the house all day. Some cultures expect girls to climb trees and play, just as boys do.

Some cultures expect boys to fight.

Some cultures expect boys to run away from fights.

People seem to grow up the way their culture expects them to.

How are girls expected to act in our culture? Write a list of behaviors that parents, teachers, and other adults seem to expect from girls. Here are some ideas. You add your ideas to the list.

Girls are nice. _____

Girls are thoughtful. _____

Girls are loving. _____

Girls are not strong. _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

How are boys expected to act in our culture? Add your own ideas and make a list of behaviors that parents, teachers, and other adults seem to expect of boys.

Boys are aggressive. _____

Boys never cry. _____

Boys are strong. _____

Boys do not talk about problems. _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

What about deaf people? Does our culture expect deaf people to behave in certain ways? Write a list of behaviors that hearing people expect from deaf people?

Deaf people are quiet.

Deaf people cannot communicate.

Deaf people always need help.

Deaf people are not smart.

Deaf people are lazy.

As people become more mature, they can make choices about their lives. A person does not have to do everything that other people expect.

Look at the lists you made for girls, boys, and deaf people. Are all these things true for you? Of course not. No one fits these stereotypes, and no one should fit these stereotypes. Every person is an individual.

Socialization may also interfere with assertiveness. Quiet girls are not assertive. Nice girls do not talk about their feelings and ideas. Thoughtful girls do not ask for things for themselves. Strong boys do not ask for help. Aggressive boys are not assertive. Quiet deaf boys are not assertive.

It is very difficult to change many of these ideas. We learned these ideas when we were young. But we must change these ideas to become assertive.

Do this activity:

1. **Look at the lists you made.**
2. **Check ( ) the ideas that people told you.**
3. **Check ( ) the ideas that interfere with your being assertive.**

Fear also interferes with being assertive. What are people afraid of? Mostly people are afraid of what other people think.

People are afraid that:
Other people will think that they are stupid.
Other people will think that they are foolish.
Other people will think that they are bossy.

What are you afraid that other people will think of you? Write down some of your fears.

Guilt also interferes with being assertive. Many people feel guilty when they do not do what other people want them to do. For example: Karen wants to go shopping with her new friend Marie. Her old friend Terry will feel jealous. Karen feels guilty because Terry is jealous, and so Karen does not go shopping with Marie. Karen feels guilty and so she does not do what she wants. Karen is not assertive.
Here is an example of a non-assertive behavior.

Joe is deaf. His brother, Peter, is hearing. Joe is 17. Peter is 16. Peter and Joe and Will, another hearing boy. are playing cards. Peter and Will are laughing. Joe missed the joke. Joe smiles and laughs, but he doesn't understand why. Joe is being passive. He is not being assertive. Why is Joe passive? What is Joe afraid of? Maybe he is afraid that he will look stupid. Maybe he is afraid that Peter and Will will laugh at him. Maybe Joe is afraid that Will and Peter will think that he is a bother. Think of some other fears that Joe might have. Write down Joe's fears.

_____

_____

_____

Perhaps when Joe was a little boy he learned some ideas about boys. Maybe he learned that:

Boys should know what is happening

or

Boys should be cool.

What other ideas about boys might Joe have learned?

_____

_____

_____

Perhaps Joe learned some ideas about deaf people. Maybe he learned that:

Deaf people should be quiet

or

Deaf people should not ask so many questions.

What other ideas about deaf people might Joe have learned?

_____

_____

_____

Now it is your turn. Think about a time when you were not assertive. Write about that time.

_____

_____

_____

Why were you not assertive? What were you afraid of? Write down your fears.

_____

_____

_____

Why were you not assertive? What ideas did you learn about how boys or girls or deaf people should behave? Write down your ideas.

_____

_____

_____

Do you think it is good to keep your fears? You may not want to keep these ideas and feelings if you want to be more assertive.

When do you have problems being assertive?

Some people have problems saying "No." Joan has problems saying "no." Joan's sister is married. Her sister has a baby. She always asks Joan to babysit. Joan always says yes to her sister. Sometimes Joan has other plans; sometimes Joan does not feel like watching the baby, but she says yes anyway. Joan is a person who has problems saying no. Why do you think that she has this problem?

Some people have problems asking for help or asking for favors. Dave has problems asking for help. Dave does not understand his math, but Dave is embarrassed to ask the teacher for help. Dave tries to solve the math problems, but he cannot solve them. Dave will probably get an F in math. Dave is a person who has difficulty asking for help. Why do you think that he has this problem?

Some people have problems expressing their feelings. John will not say that he is angry. He keeps his feelings inside. John is trying to watch TV. Two other students are standing in front of the TV. John asks the students to move. The students laugh at John. John is angry, but he doesn't tell the other students. He goes back to his room and he kicks the door. John has problems expressing his feelings. Why do you think John has this problem?

Some people have problems expressing their ideas. Anita has a problem expressing her ideas. Anita is with a group of friends. Her friends all want to drink some beer that night. Anita does not think that it is a good idea. The students will get in trouble if they drink beer. But Anita does not tell her friends her idea. She has problems expressing her ideas. Why do you think Anita has this problem?

Some people have problems asking for information.

Don had this problem. His care needed repair. so he took it to a service station. The person at the service station charged Don $163.00 for the repairs. Don did not understand why the repairs were so expensive. But he did not ask the service station attendant to explain. He just paid the bill.

Why do you think Don had this problem?

Do you have any of these five problems?

Do you have a problem:

- Saying no?
- Asking for help or for favors?
- Expressing your feelings?
- Expressing your ideas?
- Asking for information?

Make a list of five specific things you have problems with. Write down five things you cannot tell other people. For example:

- I cannot tell my roommate not to borrow my clothes.
- I cannot tell my science teacher that I do not understand his sign language.
- I cannot tell my boyfriend that I want to date other boys.

Write your own list of cannots.

1. I cannot _____

_____

_____

2. I cannot _____

_____

_____

3. I cannot _____

_____

_____

4. I cannot _____

_____

_____

5. I cannot _____

_____

_____

Now look at your list of cannots.
Why are you afraid of each thing on your list?
Do you have ideas that interfere with your assertiveness?
What are they?

Chapter III

How Do People Interfere with Your Assertiveness?

Sometimes other people do not want you to be assertive. These people want to have things their own way. These people manipulate you. They want you to be quiet and passive so they can get their own way. How do other people keep you from being assertive? How do other people manipulate you?

You might be talking to someone, but the person does not want to hear what you are saying. The person might change the subject. Then you will have to discuss a different subject. You will be off the point of what you wanted to say.

Here is an example: Steven is unhappy because his girlfriend, Susan, ignored him at a party. He wants to talk about it and find out why she didn't talk to him.

Steven tells Susan, "I was unhappy at the party last night. You didn't speak to me at all."

Susan says, "You didn't speak to me at the party last week."

What happens now? Steven may defend himself and they will talk about the party last week. They will not discuss the party last night, or Steven's feelings about it. Steven really wants to talk about last night, but he lets himself get off the point.

or

Steven says, "I was unhappy at the party last night. You didn't speak to me at all."

Susan says, "It is not important for me to speak to you."

What happens now? Steven and Susan will talk about the importance of talking to each other. This is not what Steven wants to talk about. Steven has let himself get off the point.

or

Steven says, "I was unhappy at the party last night. You didn't speak to me at all."

Susan says, "We often talk to each other."

What happens now? Steven and Susan discuss how often they talk to each other. This is not what Steven wants to talk about either. Steven has let himself **get off the point.**

or

Steven says: "I was unhappy at the party last night. You didn't speak to me at all."
Susan says: "Don't you like me?"

What happens now? Steven tells Susan how much he likes her. This is not what Steven wants to talk about either. Steven has let himself **get off the point.**

In all of these situations Steven is not assertive. He does not discuss his own feelings and Susan does not respond to Steven's feelings. Susan has manipulated Steven. She got Steven **off the point.** What can Steven do?

Sometimes another person can manipulate you by **making you feel guilty.** Here is an example.

Gina wants to spend the weekend with her friend, Sara. Her parents want her to come home.

They say: "We're always home alone."
Then Gina feels sorry for her parents, and **she feels guilty.**

or

They say: "We are old. We may not live long. Then you won't see us."
Then Gina feels sorry for her parents, and **she feels guilty.**

or

They say: "We planned a nice dinner for you, and you don't want to be with us."
Then Gina feels sorry for her parents, and **she feels guilty.**

What can Gina say to her parents? What can Gina do?

Sometimes a manipulating person may **explain your behavior to you.** Here is an example.

Anne and Paul are writing a report together. Paul is not working very hard. Anne says: "I am doing more work than you are. It doesn't feel right."

Paul says, "You work too hard all the time."

Then Anne defends herself, and Paul and Anne are talking about Anne. This is not what Anne wants to discuss. What can Anne do?

or

Sam tells his friend Rick: "I am worried that I will fail Chemistry. Can you help me with my homework?"

Rick says: "You worry too much."

Now Rick does not have to help Sam with his homework, and Sam doesn't feel very good. What can Sam do?

Do people manipulate you? Do people try to:

- **Get you off the point?**
- **Make you feel sorry for them?**
- **Explain your own behavior to you?**

If people do these things, they are **manipulating** you. Watch your relationships with people. See if people try to manipulate you. Write down a time when a person tried to manipulate you. How did you feel? What did you do? What could you try to do next time?

Chapter IV

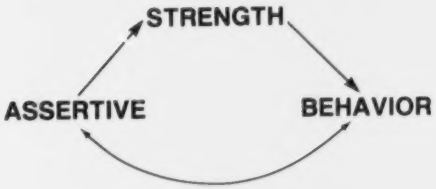
What Are Your Strengths?

In the first three chapters, you read about:

- What assertiveness means.
- How people learn not to be assertive.
- How other people stop you from being assertive.

In this chapter, you will learn how to become more assertive. Sometimes it is difficult to be assertive. You need to be strong.

You are already strong. You already have many strengths. When you learn about your own strengths you will feel good about yourself. When you feel strong, you can behave more assertively. If you are assertive, it makes you feel stronger. Strength and assertive behavior help each other grow.



How strong are you now? What strengths do you already have? Here are some examples of strengths, to give you ideas.

sense of humor	patient
thoughful	loving
hard working	friendly

Make a list of your own strengths.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now choose a partner. Tell your partner the strengths that he or she has. Your partner should write down what you say. Then your partner will tell you some strengths that you have. Write down what your partner says.

My strengths.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Here is another experiment to help you learn your own strengths.

Who is someone you admire? Write the person's name.

I admire _____

What are this person's strengths?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How are you like this person? Circle the strengths that you and the person you admire both have. Now choose one strength that the person has and you do not have. Choose a strength that you want to develop. Write that strength below:

I want to become more _____.

Chapter V

Becoming More Responsible

On page 21 you wrote a list of things that you cannot tell other people. Do you remember that list? Look at it now.

Copy the list again here.

1. I cannot _____

_____

2. I cannot _____

_____

3. I cannot _____

_____

4. I cannot _____

_____

5. I cannot _____

_____

Now you must change your list. Cross out each "cannot." In its place, write "won't." Your new list will look like this:

won't
I cannot say no to my friends.

This may seem strange, but it is really very important. "Cannot" and "won't" mean two very different things.

"Cannot" means not able.
"Won't" means that you can, but that you refuse.

Do you see the difference?

Read this sample conversation:

Mary: My history teacher gave me a C on my report card, but I deserved a B.

Jean: Why don't you talk to him about it?

Mary: I cannot talk to him about my grades.

Jean: Don't you know how to communicate?

Mary: Silly, of course I do!

Jean: Then why can't you talk to your teacher?

Mary: He won't understand.

Jean: Aren't you understandable?

Mary: Of course I am. That's not what I mean!

Jean: What do you mean?

Mary: I mean I am afraid to talk with him.

Jean: Then you really mean that you won't talk with him because you are afraid.

Mary: I guess so.

Do you understand the difference between can't and won't? Explain the difference.

Can't means_____

Won't means_____

If you say, "I can't say no," does that mean you are not able to say the word? Of course you can say it. You mean that you are afraid to say no, or that you don't want to say it. You are choosing not to say no. "I can't" means you have no power. "I won't" means you are taking power over what you do.

You have changed your sentences from "I cannot" to "I won't." Now what is the next step? Pick one of those sentences that you want to change. Cross out won't and write will. Your new statement will look like this:

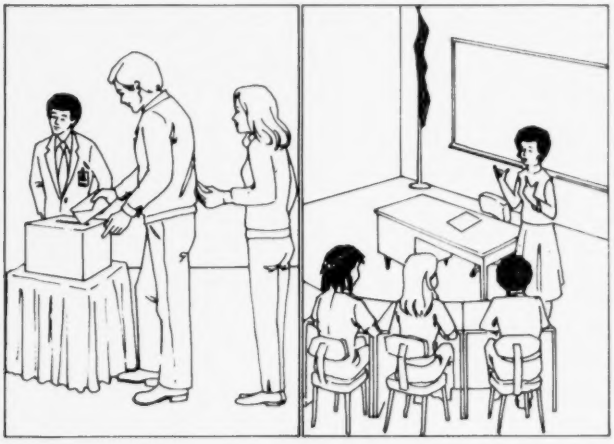
will
won't
I cannot say no to my friends.

Now you have a new goal. You have decided to try a new kind of behavior. Good luck!

Chapter VI

What Are Your Rights?

Do you know your rights? Rights are privileges that everyone should have. The government guarantees many rights:



Everyone has the right to vote!

Everyone has the right to an education!

Every deaf person has the right to an interpreter.

Some rights do not come from the government. Our schools and our families guarantee some rights.

You have the right to use the car.

You have the right to tell your side of the story.

Some rights we must guarantee ourselves. They are very important to our own growth. Other people will not necessarily guarantee these rights, but we must guarantee them ourselves.

You have the right to be taken seriously. This may be a little hard to understand, but it is very important. Here is an example:

Joan's friends always tease her. Joan is a little bit overweight. She is plump. Her friends call her "fatty".

Joan doesn't like this nickname. She tells her friends, "My name is Joan. I don't like "Fatty." Her friends laugh and say, "You don't mind." Joan feels afraid, but she takes herself seriously and she wants others to take her seriously. She says, "Yes, I do. Call me Joan."

Her friends still laugh and still call her "Fatty," but Joan does not answer. After a few days, her friends take her seriously. They stop calling her "Fatty." Now her friends call her "Joan."

Joan needed courage to be assertive with her friends. She needed to take her own feelings seriously. Then her friends could also take her seriously.

You have the same right. You have the right to be taken seriously. But you must take yourself seriously first.

Do people do or say something to you that you do not like?

Do people tease you?

Do people ignore your feelings?

Do people ignore your ideas?

If so, then you must believe that you have a right to your own feelings and ideas. You must tell other people your feelings and ideas. Then they will take you seriously.

Rights also require responsibilities. When you do or say what you believe, there are results and consequences. You may think you have the right to steal. But then you must accept the consequences. You will go to jail if you are caught. You may feel you have the right to drink beer in the dorm. Then you must accept the consequences of breaking the school rules.

You must be responsible in your personal relations too. You may tell someone that you don't like him. The consequences may be that the person's is angry. You have the responsibility to accept this consequence.

Here are some other rights you have that will help you to be assertive.

1. **You have the right to say "no."** You do not have to do everything that other people want you to do. Sometimes people say "yes" because they feel they **should** say "yes." They **should** always be nice. They **should** always help other people. They feel guilty when they say no! Here is an example: Marty planned to go bowling with his friends. His older sister came to his house. She needed a babysitter for the evening. Marty did not want to babysit, but he felt **guilty.** He felt guilty because his sister didn't have much time for fun. So he agreed to babysit, but he was angry. He wanted to go bowling. Think about this situation. What **should** Marty have done? Can you think of a time when you said "yes" but you wanted to say "no?" Discuss this with a classmate.

2. **You have the right to feel your emotions and to express them.** It is not bad to feel anger or hate or love or fear. Feelings are all good. There are no bad feelings. You may express your feelings badly but you cannot feel them badly.

Imagine this situation:

A friend borrows your belt. The friend doesn't tell you. You feel angry. What could you do to express your anger?

- o You could hit the person.
- o You could steal the belt back and your friend's belt too.
- o You could keep quiet.
- o You could tell your friend "I'm angry because you took my belt and you didn't ask me.

What behavior is most appropriate? Why?

3. **You have the right to judge yourself.**

Look at this example:

Your friend wants to go to the movies. You want to stay home and study for a test. Your friend says, "You are stupid. You don't know how to have fun." You have the **right** to decide what is good for you. You have the right to decide what is fun for you. You may prefer to get good grades. That is your **right.**

Can you think of a time when you let other people's judgment rule your decision?

4. **You have the right to express your ideas.**

Sometimes people are afraid to think differently. They think that they must agree with the people around them.

A psychologist did an experiment which shows how much people conform. It shows how people are afraid to express a different opinion.

The psychologist hired three people. These three people helped the psychologist. The psychologist showed the three people these three lines:

He told the people to say, "See, the lines are the same length." Then the psychologist hired another person. The psychologist did not say anything to this new person. The psychologist showed all four people these lines.

He asked: What line is the longest? All the three people who had talked to the psychologist said, "All three lines are the same." The fourth person agreed that all the lines were the same although the person could see that the lines were different.

The psychologist repeated this experiment many, many times. Sixty-six percent of the people agreed with the three people. These 66 percent said, "All the lines are the same." These people were afraid to express their ideas. Why? These people did not want to seem different.

Do you have ideas that you are afraid to express?

Below is a list of statements. Circle your opinions. Do you Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree?

1. The schools should teach teenagers about birth control.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. Young people should live together before they get married.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. Marijuana should be made legal.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. Schools should get rid of grades.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. The U.S.A. should build more nuclear weapons.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. Men should do half the housework.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. Girls should ask boys out for dates.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. Deaf people should learn to lipread.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. Hearing people should learn ASL.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. Capital punishment is a bad idea.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Discuss these ideas with your classmates. Plan to discuss one of these issues with another friend this week. Express your opinions. Express your ideas. And remember to listen to other people's ideas and opinions, too.

Chapter VII

When Were You Assertive?

You have looked at problems with assertiveness. You have looked at your own problems. Now it is time to look at a successful experience with assertiveness.

1. Choose a partner. Tell your partner about a time when you were assertive.

2. What helped you to be assertive? Discuss these questions with your partner.

   - What strengths did you use?
   - How did you feel about yourself?
   - How did the other person feel?
   - What rights did you use?

3. What would you have done if you were passive?

4. What would you have done if you were aggressive?

To be assertive, you must:

- Act confidently.
- Be clear about what you want to say.
- Make a choice.
- Be responsible to yourself.
- Know your strengths and use them.

Here is an example of being assertive.

A friend wants to borrow $5.00. This friend already owes you $5.00. You like this person, and you understand that her family doesn't have a lot of money. But you also need your spending money. You don't want to lend her the money. Answer these questions.

What is the worst thing that will happen if you do not lend her the money?

_____

_____

_____

What rights do you have?

_____

_____

_____

What strengths do you have?

_____

_____

_____

What is your goal?

_____

_____

_____

How will you feel if you say "yes"?

_____

_____

_____

How will you feel if you say "no?"

_____

_____

_____

Now try a role play with a classmate. Choose a partner. The partner asks to borrow $5.00. **You** be assertive. **Your partner** will try to manipulate you to lend the money. Stay assertive. Now change rules. **You** ask to borrow $5.00 from your partner. Your **partner** should be assertive.

Homework. Do these things to help you be more assertive.

1. Say "no" to one thing you don't want to do.
2. Ask someone to help you.
3. Ask a stranger for directions.
4. Tell someone your opinion.
5. Tell someone how you feel.

Chapter VIII

Say It Again and Again

You can learn some techniques that will help you become more assertive. One technique is called the "broken record." This technique is simple--you say what you want again and again.

Small children often use this technique. For instance, a family is at the zoo. The children ask their parents for ice cream cones. The parents say, "maybe later." The children keep asking, again and again. This is called persistence.

To be persistent, you must not be afraid to bother someone. You must not be afraid of being boring. You also must know exactly what you want. You must say what you want, again and again.

Here is another example. Karen is 14 years old. She thinks she is old enough to shop for clothes without her mother.

Karen: I want to go shopping for my new skirt on Saturday. I want to go by myself.

Mother: We'll go shopping together. You cannot take the bus alone.

Karen: I want to go by myself. I think I am responsible enough.

Mother: You might get lost. You will not know how to talk to the salesperson.

Karen: I want to go by myself. I will find my own way, and I can communicate with the salesperson.

Mother: That's enough, Karen. We'll go shopping for the skirt together.

Karen: I know you want to go with me, but I want to go by myself.

Mother: I'm getting angry. I'm going shopping with you or you won't go at all.

Karen: I know you are getting angry, but I want to go by myself. I am old enough to take care of myself.

Mother: We'll discuss it later.

Karen: I want to discuss it now. I want to go by myself.

Mother: Why is it so important to you?

Karen: I want to be more responsible for myself. I have to learn some day. I want to go by myself.

Mother: Well, I can see your point, but I'm not sure that you can handle it all alone.

Karen: Let me go by myself, Mother. You will see how responsible I can be.

Mother: Well, if it is so important to you, I guess you can go shopping by yourself.

Karen: Thank you, Mom.

Karen was very persistent. She knew what she wanted. She said what she wanted very clearly. She also behaved very carefully. She did not get angry. She did not lose her temper and say stupid things to her mother. She behaved responsibly. This helped her mother see that she could be responsible for herself.

Here are some more situations. Try them out with a classmate or friend. You play one role, and your partner should play the other. Then change roles.

1. You bought a pair of shoes. You wore them one month and the heel fell off. Take them back to the store for a refund.

2. Someone asks you out on a date. You don't want to go.

3. You want to spend the weekend with friends. Your parents want you to stay home.

4. A friend wants you to smoke marijuana. You don't want to.

5. A friend wants you to skip English class. You don't think it's a good idea.

Now try some situations of your own.

Here are some more situations. Try them out with a classmate or friend. You play one role, and your friend should play the other. Then change roles.

1. You bought a pair of shoes. You wore the shoes one month and then the heel fell off. Take them back to the store. You want a refund.
2. A friend asks you out on a date. You don't want to go.
3. You want to spend the weekend with a friend. Your parent wants you to stay home.
4. A friend wants you to smoke marijuana. You don't want to.
5. A friend wants you to skip English class. You don't want to.

Now try some situations of your own.

It is also important that you show other people that you are listening. You must be **persistent** and you must **listen to the other person.**

Look at this example: Bill's friend Patrick has some beer in his room. He wants Bill to drink some beer with him in his room.

Patrick: Hey, Bill, I got a six pack of beer in my room. Come on over and let's get drunk.

Bill: Well, Patrick, I'd rather not. I have to be careful. I don't want to get into any trouble.

Patrick: Don't be silly. No one will catch us.

Bill: Probably no one will catch us, but I'd rather not. **Notice that Bill agrees with Patrick, but then repeats what he feels.**

Patrick: You are being stupid. Why are you so chicken?

Bill: I may be a chicken, but I'd rather not. **Notice that Bill again agrees with Patrick, but then he repeats what he feels.**

Patrick: Hey man, what is happening to you? You used to be so cool. You are becoming a bore.

Bill: I understand that you may think that I am a bore, but I'd rather not. Thanks. **Notice again, that Bill shows that he has understood Patrick, but then he repeats his own feeling.**

Patrick: Well, goodbye, Bill. You sure are changing. What a bore!

In this situation: Bill repeated his own message. He was persistent.
Bill showed that he understood Patrick.
Bill also took a **risk**. What was his risk?

Bill also used his **strength**. What was his strength?

Bill also used a **right**. What right did he use?

Bill also had a **goal**. What was his goal?

Try some more role-plays of your own. Here are some examples:

1. Say "no" to partying.
2. Ask someone to go out with you.
3. Tell someone that you are angry.
4. Tell someone that you disagree.
5. Ask someone for some information.

The "I" Message

The "I" message is another assertive technique. You can give another person honest information about your feelings. You tell the other person how you feel about something specific. In the conversation between Patrick and Bill, Bill could say:

> **I feel angry when you pressure me to drink beer.**

You don't blame the other person.
You don't nag the other person.
You don't make fun of the other person.
You don't lecture the other person.
You don't judge the other person.
You don't scream at the other person.

You just tell your own feeling and you tell what makes you feel that way.
Here is an example:

Your roommate has left a mess on your bed. You say: "I feel angry when you mess up my bed because I have to clean it off before I can nap.

It is also good to tell the person why you feel the way you do. An "I" message has three parts.

Name the feeling "I feel _____"
Tell when "When you _____"
Tell why "Because _____"

Try writing some "I" messages

1. Your best friend is late for an appointment. Tell her how you feel.
   a. I feel _____
   b. When you _____
   c. Because _____

2. Your friend didn't call you. Tell him how you feel.
   a. I feel _____
   b. When you _____
   c. Because _____

3. Your teacher blamed you for something you did not do. Tell the teacher how you feel.
   a. I feel _____
   b. When you _____
   c. Because _____

4. Your brother is bothering you when you are using the TTY.
   a. I feel _____
   b. When you _____
   c. Because _____

5. Your doctor speaks only to your mother and not to you. Tell the doctor how you feel.
   a. I feel _____
   b. When you _____
   c. Because _____

Now think of some situations of your own. Write "I" messages.

Try some role-plays with a friend or classmate.

- You feel disappointed because a friend didn't invite you to a party.
- You feel angry because the teacher gave you a test that was not fair.
- You feel pressured by your boy or girl friend to have sex.
- You feel upset because the salesperson is ignoring you.

Chapter IX

Non-Verbal Communication

The words you use are only part of your message. Your gestures, facial expression, posture, the way you sign, your clothes and hairstyle, are all part of what you say. They help you give your message. This is non-verbal communication. It is very important.

This boy says there is nothing wrong with him. Do you believe him? Of course you don't. His non-verbal communication says very clearly, "I am depressed." People believe your non-verbal messages more than the words you use.

This girl is applying for a job. This is the way she looks when she goes to the employment office. Do you believe she really wants the job? Will anyone believe it? Why not?

Let's look at some specific ways to communicate non-verbally.

Facial Expression and Eye Contact

Americans believe that you must look directly into a person's eyes when you are talking. If you do not look directly into the person's eyes, Americans believe you are trying to hide something. In this culture, we don't believe people who won't look into our eyes. Eye contact helps build trust and closeness. If you want to be assertive, look directly into the other person's eyes.

Your face is important, too. Do you pout or have a sour look? This won't help you be assertive. Do you clench your teeth or raise your eyebrows? Look at these pictures. What are the faces saying? Teach your face to say what you want it to say.

Does this person really want to say yes? How do you know?

Is this person happy? How do you know?

Is this person sad? How do you know?

Does this person understand? How do you know?

Gestures

When you use sign language, your gestures are your words. Gestures in sign language are like tone of voice in speech.

- What do you think when someone signs very slowly?

- What do you think when someone signs very fast?

- What do you think when someone signs very small?

- What do you think when someone signs hesitantly?

The way you sign should match your words and thoughts and feelings. Teach your gestures to be assertive.

Try an experiment. Sign "I want you to help me". Sign it slowly; sign it fast; sign it big; sign it small. How does each one feel? Try the same thing with the word "no".

Body Movements and Posture

It is also important to stand and sit and move assertively. Look at the pictures on page 52. How do these people feel about themselves? You should enter a room assertively. Try entering the room assertively. Now enter it aggressively. Now enter it passively. How does this feel? How do people react? The way you walk or stand tells how you feel about yourself.

Try walking different ways.

Walk into a room with confidence.

Leave a room after you have made a terrible mistake.

Walk out of a boring discussion.

Walk up to someone you are angry with.

Posture also tells how you feel. How do the people in these pictures feel?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

Try these experiences.

Slump in a chair and say "no."

Stand at attention and say "no."

Hold your head in your hands and say "no."

Put your head on your desk and say "no."

Each of these experiences produces a different kind of "no." Did you feel the differences?

The Way You Look

Your hairstyle, your clothes, your jewelry, your makeup can also affect your assertive communication. Try this experiment. Go shopping. Wear your best clothes; comb your hair. How do people react to you?

Now go shopping again. Wear your oldest, sloppiest clothes. Do you feel different? Do people react differently to you? Only you can measure these differences.

Chapter X

The New Assertive You

By now, you have worked hard to become more assertive.

- You have learned to tell the difference between assertive and passive behavior.
- You have learned how parents, teachers, and other people in your culture teach people not to be assertive.
- You have learned how other people may try to manipulate you.
- You have learned that you have to be persistent in telling people what you want.
- You have learned that really listening to other people can help you be more assertive.
- You have learned the importance of non-verbal communication.

Here are some final activities for you to do.

1. Write one myth that you no longer believe.

2. Write down one manipulative tactic that people have tried to use on you.

3. Write down a fear that you don't have anymore.

4. Write down five things that you want.

5. Write down all the "I cannots" that you have changed to "I will."

6. Look in the mirror and tell yourself your five greatest strengths.

7. Write one goal that will help you to become more assertive.

8. Draw a picture of yourself as an assertive person.

9. Make a list of your regrets.

10. Ask another person for a favor.

11. Tell someone your feelings.

12. Tell someone your opinion.

13. Say "no" politely, uncertainly, angrily, sadly, teasingly, assertively.

14. Live your life more assertively.

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